

## ON TRACK WITH MDT

On behalf of the members of Team Transportation, I want to give a great big THANK YOU to the transportation industry for making the September 20 American Heart Association's (AHA's) Helena Heart Walk a huge success. Thanks to your support, our team raised the most money of any team there, over \$4,000! All I can say is that your commitment to our great state never ceases to humble and amaze me.

When I agreed to head up a team for the Helena Heart Walk, I knew that the transportation industry would most likely respond with enthusiasm, but even I was awed by your response: donations came in from contractors, truckers, engineers, airlines, fixed base operators, MDT employees, Rossiter School employees (my wife and her friends), and more. That amazing list of donors demonstrates the strength of the transportation industry and shows that we have our eye on the future, and I for one am delighted to be a part of that.

The AHA has demonstrated a similar commitment to Montana's communities by offering financial assistance with our Community Transportation Enhancement Program, or CTEP, bike and pedestrian paths, especially near schools. When they offered their support, I was thrilled because I know it can be difficult to raise local matching dollars on some of these projects. I am humbled by and grateful for the AHA's offer of support, and I look forward to developing that partnership in the future. By working together, we can make our neighborhoods more beautiful places, not only in terms of improving individual health, but also by creating new bike/pedestrian paths that enhance our communities overall.

On a personal note, the importance of the Heart Association's efforts hit close to home a few weeks ago when my father-in-law suffered a heart attack and flat-lined for two and a half minutes. Luckily, the doctors were able to revive him and fly him to Billings, where he had two stents put in. Amazingly, we took him home in just three days! Later, we were talking about what he was doing prior to his heart attack, and I learned that the last check he wrote was a donation to my wife Vicky for the upcoming Heart Walk. I don't know about you, but I find the timing of that more than coincidental.

As I look back upon the past few weeks, I know that I have walked away with a deep appreciation for my friends and partners in the transportation industry – and with a very personal reminder of the preciousness of life.

So, the next time you're riding on one of our bike paths or driving through a construction zone, please take a moment to silently thank those who have made those improvements possible. And, whatever else you do, please take the time to be healthy, whether that be making time for exercise, checking your cholesterol, or *driving slow and thinking fast* when out on the road. By taking good care of yourself, you can stay safe. That, after all, is the best way to stay "on track" with MDT.

Dave Galt

Director